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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [KCHG](#) [PREL](#) [GM](#)
SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SULLIVAN'S MEETING WITH
GERMAN OFFICIALS ON THE PRESIDENT'S MAJOR ECONOMIES
CONFERENCE

REF: (A) Berlin 3392, (B) Berlin 1396 (C) Berlin 1284

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY. On August 10, EEB Assistant
Secretary Dan Sullivan met with officials from the

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German Chancellery, Ministry of Economics and
Technology and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss
the President's September 27-28 Major Economies
Conference. Sullivan also conducted a widely attended
press roundtable where much of the focus was on how
and whether the Major Economies Conference would fit
within the UNFCCC and whether the U.S. would agree to
binding caps on CO2 emissions. German officials were
generally supportive of the initiative, and argued
that the goal is to have a framework compatible with
the UNFCCC process. They were also receptive to the
point that this builds upon the initiative agreed upon
at the G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm. END SUMMARY.

FEDERAL CHANCELLERY

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12. (SBU) Dr. Peter Roesgen, Director of
Infrastructure Planning at the Federal Chancellery,
said that Germany sees the starting point in any
global initiative on climate change involving G-8
countries to be the principles agreed upon in
Heiligendamm. Roesgen emphasized that it is important
to have a truly global process that includes not just
major emitters, but also countries likely to be most
affected by climate change. A/S Sullivan responded
that the President's broad climate initiative
announced before the G-8 Summit not only focused on
major economies, but also on an expanded focus on
issues such as adaptation and deforestation that
affect many smaller countries. What was agreed upon
in Heiligendamm, Roesgen said, was the need for broad

ownership by all affected countries. Roesgen said that no one process can solve such a global challenge, but that all initiatives must be complementary. Roesgen was reassured by A/S Sullivan's emphasis that the President's initiative will contribute to a global agreement within the UNFCCC process.

¶3. (SBU) Roesgen was impressed by the sample U.S. matrix provided by A/S Sullivan, but cautioned that government funding is not the only issue to focus on; market based initiatives such as an Emissions Trading System (ETS) are also important. Sullivan explained the purpose of this matrix and the first meeting was to find out what other countries are doing on climate change and to agree on standards of measurement and terminology that will inform the broader UN process.

¶4. (SBU) Bodo Linscheidt, of the Chancellery's Environment Section, stated that Germany was pleased with any framework, including the U.S. proposal, which includes major emitting countries. He said that there appears to be more convergence between U.S. and European views on combating climate change than in the past. In discussions over the G-8 + 5 meeting on climate change tentatively scheduled for October 16, Linscheidt proposed that it might be useful to sequential conferences following the President's September meeting, hosted by other countries such as Japan and China focused on different aspects of climate change, all leading to an agreement in 2009 that would provide for a post-2012 framework. Sullivan responded that too many different initiatives could be counterproductive, and that the September Conference of Major Economies was not intended to be a "one off" event but the beginning of an intensive process focusing on a specific goal by the end of

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¶2008.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS AND TECHNOLOGY

¶5. (SBU) At the Economics Ministry, Sullivan met with State Secretary Joachim Wuermerling, who expressed interest in how the major economies conference would feed into the UNFCCC's Conference in Bali. Wuermerling reiterated that any new approach must complement the UNFCCC to gain German support. Sullivan replied that this meeting is the beginning of a process that will continue beyond Bali, but would obviously feed into the larger UNFCCC process. The first step will be to study national policies and programs to look for complementary programs and gaps.

¶6. (SBU) Wuermerling welcomed the U.S.' bottom-up approach to this subject, commenting that Germany is currently going through a similar exercise as it drafts a national energy strategy. The Economics Ministry is especially focused on market-driven mechanisms to combat climate change, rather than via regulation. In this context, he said that encouraging energy efficiency without distorting markets and competition was especially challenging.

¶7. (SBU) Uwe Schroeder-Selbach, the Ministry's Advisor on Sustainable Energy, asked whether this initiative would go beyond that agreed at Heiligendamm. Sullivan replied that this conference is a direct follow through to our commitments at the G-8 Summit to work to bring major emitting countries into a global framework to combat climate change. Sullivan added the goal of the process is to go beyond Heiligendamm and to actually get a framework agreement among the major economies and long-term global greenhouse gas reduction goal by the end of 2008.

FOREIGN OFFICE

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¶8. (SBU) Viktor Elbling, Head of the Foreign Office's International Economic Policy Division, welcomed the U.S. initiative, stating that it was an excellent time to follow up on the "most important" initiative agreed upon at the G-8 Summit. He agreed with the U.S. approach, commenting that "everyone knows we must talk to emerging economies" about climate change. Elbling commented on the number of climate change meetings planned in the next four months, noting that it will be important to clarify how the President's Major Economies Conference fits into these other initiatives. Sullivan agreed, emphasizing the U.S. initiative would strive to provide baseline information that could inform other processes. Elbling opined that this would be a valuable tool but cautioned that this should be done as factually as possible, to avoid discrepancies in measurements across economies. At the end of the entire process, Elbling said it was important to have a balanced result - one that is flexible but also concrete in its goals and approach. Germany understands these challenges as it is currently working to implement the targets agreed upon at the European Council Summit in March with concrete initiatives to reach these goals. Elbling stated that Germany was supportive of the conference and would definitely participate at a high level, commenting that the Foreign Office is very active on climate change issues within the government.

PRESS

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¶9. (SBU) There is high interest in the U.S. position on climate change policy at all levels of German society, as evinced by the large turnout of

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journalists at the A/S Secretary's press roundtable. Sixteen members of the German and international press came on short notice to hear about the President's Major Emitters Conference and discuss climate change issues. The majority of questions focused on how and whether the Major Economies Conference would fit within the UNFCCC and whether the U.S. will agree to global caps on CO2.

COMMENT

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¶10. (SBU) German officials who met A/S Sullivan received the U.S. initiative positively, although some, particularly in the Chancellor's office, were initially skeptical about the USG desire to work within the UNFCCC process. This skepticism could be due in part to the German government's belief that climate change is "their" issue, and also a failure to recognize that Heiligendamm marked a serious commitment on the part of the USG to tackle climate change at the global level. In any case, German officials appear ready to work with us to engage developed and emerging economies on this issue to develop a post 2012 climate change strategy. END
COMMENT

¶11. This cable was cleared with A/S Sullivan.

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